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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 26, 2017

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CITY COUNCIL PASSES MODERNIZED NORTH BRANCH DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Plan Will Foster New Industrial, Commercial Development Throughout Chicago

City Council today passed Mayor Rahm Emanuel's landmark plan to modernize the North Branch Industrial Corridor. Supported by Aldermen Walter Burnett, Brian Hopkins, Roderick Sawyer, Michelle Harris, Patrick Thompson, Ed Burke, Raymond Lopez, Derrick Curtis, Ricardo Munoz, Michael Scott, Daniel Solis, Jason Ervin, Gilbert Villegas, Marge Laurino, Emma Mitts, and Anthony Beale, the reforms will enable the North Branch Industrial Corridor to evolve as a vibrant, mixed-use business center while generating tens of millions of dollars for industrial and commercial development throughout the city.

"Chicago's industrial policies have been focused on the rear view mirror for too long," Mayor Emanuel said. "These improvements are designed around the future, especially the mixed-use business districts that attract and support the jobs of tomorrow."

Proposed as part of the Mayor's Industrial Corridor Modernization Initiative, the improvements will establish contemporary zoning regulations for the 760-acre North Branch Industrial Corridor, create two new funding streams to support industrial development across the city, and expand the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund to promote additional investment in South and West side commercial corridors, among other improvements.

"These improvements will support industrial investment, commercial investment, and infrastructure investment with millions of dollars of private dollars that wouldn't otherwise exist. The impact will go a long way for neighborhoods throughout the city," said Alderman Burnett.

The reforms will:

- **Re-zone of the northern and southern portions of the North Branch Corridor to accommodate the opportunity for mixed-use development.** Most of the northern portion of the North Branch will be changed to Manufacturing (M) and most of the southern portion will be changed to Downtown Service (DS). The new designations will enable a dynamic mix of uses that are currently prohibited by existing Planned Manufacturing District (PMD) zoning, which will remain in the central portion of the corridor.

- **Create a new Industrial Corridor System Fund that will support industrial development projects throughout the city.** The fund will be supported by fees paid by development projects in the North Branch and other industrial corridors that are transitioning from manufacturing to other uses. The fees will be triggered by zoning changes to non-industrial uses.
- **Expand the City’s existing Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus system to the southern portion of the North Branch corridor.** The Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus system generates funding for West, Southwest and South side commercial development projects, local infrastructure and designated City landmarks. Funds are created by voluntary payments from development projects with Downtown (D) district zoning in exchange for increased density. More than \$30 million has been pledged in the last 12 months, of which 80 percent is allocated toward retail corridors on the West, Southwest and South sides. With this expansion, new market activity along the North Branch will result in additional support for South, Southwest and West side development projects.
- **Create a North Branch Corridor Bonus system in the northern portion of the North Branch corridor.** The North Branch Bonus will enable developers to make voluntary payments in exchange for increased density for new development projects. Revenues will be used to finance transit, open space and other public improvements within the North Branch and other industrial corridors.

"These enhancements represent a transformative opportunity to create a jobs-rich, 21st century work environment in the North Branch while also promoting equitable industrial and commercial development citywide," said DPD Commissioner David L. Reifman.

"This plan recognizes that the city's industrial corridors are part of an integrated ecosystem that serves and benefits the entire city. It's an innovative approach to foster equitable development where it's needed most," said Alderman Solis.

"This ordinance will ensure that funding will be available to mitigate traffic congestion and create open space opportunities for area workers and residents," said Alderman Hopkins. "These issues require a substantial amount of financial resources and I'm proud to have played a role in this collaborative measure that will bring essential upgrades to the community and benefit the city as a whole."

Each of the reforms was recommended in the "North Branch Framework," a land use strategy adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission in May 2017 to enhance economic development opportunities in the corridor while providing new resources for transportation and open space improvements. Developed through a year-long community engagement process, the framework represents the initial phase the Mayor's Industrial Corridor Modernization Initiative, each of the industrial corridors will undergo a review and planning process tailored to its needs, including the prioritization of investments to be made with proceeds from the Industrial Corridor System Fund.

"Chicago's industrial renaissance depends on transformational land use reforms like the ones recommended in the North Branch Framework plan. The new resources will support the city's industrial legacy for years to come," said Alderman Curtis.

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